

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
INFO WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 159579

NODIS  
NOFORN FOR THE AMBASSADOR; WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS:PINT, UR

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, AND QUESTIONS  
FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

REF: (A) MOSCOW 9621

1. WE VERY MUCH APPRECIATE THE DETAIL OF REF REPORT.  
BREZHNEV WAS APPARENTLY IN BETTER FORM DURING YOUR VISIT  
THAN ON ANY PREVIOUSLY REPORTED VISIT OVER THE PAST 4  
MONTHS. THE OVERALL PATTERN REMAINS ONE OF UPS AND DOWNS,  
ALTHOUGH RECENT REPORTING STRONGLY SUGGESTS A SIGNIFICANT  
NET DECLINE DURING 1977. THERE HAVE BEEN MORE PROFOUND AND  
FREQUENT "DOWNS", DURING WHICH BREZHNEV ON OCCASION HAS  
BEEN DESCRIBED AS "IN A DAZE" AND OUT OF TOUCH WITH HIS  
SURROUNDINGS. ON OTHER OCCASIONS HE HAS BEEN VERY  
MECHANICAL IN HIS PRESENTATIONS, AND APPEARED TO BE HEAVILY

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DEPENDENT ON THOSE AROUND HIM IN GETTING THROUGH HIS  
AUDIENCES.

2. THE REPORTED HEALTH PATTERN IS STRONGLY SUGGESTIVE OF  
AN AGING INDIVIDUAL WHOSE RESERVE STRENGTH IS ESSENTIALLY  
DEPLETED, AND WHO THEREFORE TOLERATES VERY POORLY THE RE-  
CURRENT ONSLAUGHTS OF A HOST OF MEDICAL AILMENTS.

OCCURRING ALONE, OR IN A YOUNGER STRONGER INDIVIDUAL, SUCH

AILMENTS WOULD USUALLY NOT LEAD TO THE ERRATIC PERFORMANCE PATTERN APPARENT IN BREZHNEV'S CASE. ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, AND AS IS APPARENTLY THE CASE WITH BREZHNEV, EVEN NON-LIFE THREATENING CONDITIONS CAN LEAD TO RATHER PROFOUND SHORT-TERM FUNCTIONAL INCAPACITATION. BREZHNEV PROBABLY CONTINUES TO BE PLAGUED WITH INTERMITTENT FACIAL NEURALGIA WHICH MAY NOW BE ASSOCIATED WITH MORE PROLONGED EPISODES OF SEVERE PAIN REQUIRING STRONG MEDICATIONS FOR CONTROL. RECENT REPORTING ALSO RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE HAS EARLY PULMONARY PROBLEMS. THESE ARE ALL IN ADDITION TO HIS MORE WELL KNOWN AND LONG STANDING PROBLEMS--MOST NOTABLY HEART DISEASE.

3. THE PROGNOSIS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS VIEW OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH IS THAT IT REMAINS STATISTICALLY UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL SUFFER A FATAL EPISODE WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR OR SO. HIS PERFORMANCE, HOWEVER, WILL CONTINUE TO BE AS UNEVEN--OCCASIONALLY ALARMINGLY SO--AS IT HAS BEEN THIS PAST SPRING. HIS MULTIPLE HEALTH PROBLEMS WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE CONTINUOUS TREATMENT. HE WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE REST, BUT FOLLOWING EXTENDED BREAKS WILL PROBABLY APPEAR VIGOROUS AND TO BE IN RELATIVELY GOOD HEALTH. SUSTAINED PERIODS WITHOUT A BREAK WILL PROBABLY LEAD TO A RAPID--BUT REVERSIBLE--DECLINE IN HIS PERFORMANCE TO THE MARGINAL  
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LEVELS REPORTED SEVERAL TIMES THIS SPRING. THIS GENERAL PATTERN IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, WITH A SLOW OVERALL DECLINE, FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS OR UNTIL SOME ACUTE EPISODE SUCH AS A HEART ATTACK OR STROKE PROVES FATAL OR TOTALLY INCAPACITATING.

4. MEDICAL ANALYSTS WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR OBSERVATIONS ON SEVERAL POINTS RELATED TO RECENT COLLATERAL REPORTING: (A). DID BREZHNEV SHOW ANY SIGNS OF A PULMONARY PROBLEM, SUCH AS LABORED OR DEEP BREATHING, COUGH, EXPECTORATION, ETC.? (B). DID HE EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING DURING THE ONE HOUR FORTY MINUTE SESSION? (C). WHAT TIME OF THE DAY WAS THE MEETING? (D). WAS THERE ANY SUGGESTION OF A TREMOR IN BREZHNEV'S HANDS? PARTICULARLY, WE ARE INTERESTED IN A TREMOR THAT GIVES THE APPEARANCE OF RAPIDLY ROLLING A SMALL PILL BETWEEN THE THUMB AND INDEX FINGER (ASSOCIATED WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE). (E). BREZHNEV WAS RECENTLY REPORTED TO BE WEARING MAKE-UP. WAS ANY OF THIS IN EVIDENCE? WHERE? VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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